

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FISH AND GAME COMMISSION
INITIAL STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR REGULATORY ACTION
(Pre-publication of Notice Statement)

Amend Section 300
Title 14, California Code of Regulations
Re: Fall Season for Wild Turkeys, Falcon Season for Upland Game Birds, Bag Limit for
Eurasian Collared-doves

- I. Date of Initial Statement of Reasons: April 8, 2008
- II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings:
 - (a) Notice Hearing: Date: May 9, 2008
Location: Monterey
 - (b) Discussion Hearing: Date: June 27, 2008
Location: Sacramento
 - (c) Adoption Hearing: Date: August 8, 2008
Location: Carpinteria
- III. Description of Regulatory Action:
 - (a) Statement of Specific Purpose of Regulation Change and Factual Basis for Determining that Regulation Change is Reasonably Necessary:

1. Fall Season for Hunting Wild Turkeys (addition of San Diego County)

Current regulations provide for a fall turkey hunting season statewide, except for San Diego County [Subsection 300(a)(1)(G)3.a, Subsection 300(a)(2)(G)3.a, and Subsection 300(a)(3)(G)3.a.]. The Department's annual "Game Take Hunter Survey" indicates wild turkey populations have increased in San Diego County. Harvest of turkeys in San Diego County during the spring season has increased from an estimated number of 460 in 2003 to nearly 1,000 in 2006 (most recent information available). It is reasonable to conclude that the population there will support a fall season. Also, adding San Diego County to the area where turkeys can be hunted in the fall will make this regulation consistent statewide.

2. Falconry Season for Upland Game Birds

Current regulations provide for a falconry season for pheasant, quail, chukar, blue and ruffed grouse, and white-tailed ptarmigan that opens on October 1 [Subsection 300(a)(3)(A - E)(1)]. Falconers have requested that their season be changed to open at the same time as the archery

season for quail, chukars, and blue and ruffed grouse (third Saturday in August). This would allow falconers a longer season, and allow them to train their hawks on young prey that the hawks would be more capable of catching. This would make it more likely that the birds would develop into successful hunters. The Department supports this proposal. The Department sells about 600 falconry licenses annually, and only a small portion of these falconers hunt upland game birds, so this regulation change would have no effect on upland game populations.

3. Bag Limit for Eurasian Collared-doves

Eurasian collared-doves have recently become established in California and their numbers are rapidly expanding, particularly in southern California. In 2007, the Commission designated them a resident small game species, and included them in the existing dove season and bag and possession limits [Subsection 300(b)(1)(B)(2)]. The Department is proposing to provide additional hunting opportunity by removing the bag limit on Eurasian collared-doves. Removing the bag limit, yet allowing hunting of Eurasian collared-doves only within the existing dove season, would be consistent with the approach taken by some other states (for example Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi). Other states (examples are Arizona, Texas, and Georgia) have taken a more liberal approach, and allow unlimited take all year; while others (examples are Oklahoma and Louisiana) are more conservative, and include Eurasian collared-doves in the dove limit and allow their take only during the existing dove season.

- (b) Authority and Reference Sections from Fish and Game Code for Regulation:

Authority: Sections 200, 202, 203, 355, and 356 Fish and Game Code.

Reference: Sections 200, 203, 355, and 356 Fish and Game Code.

- (c) Specific Technology or Equipment Required by Regulatory Change:

None

- (d) Identification of Reports or Documents Supporting Regulation Change:

None

- (e) Public Discussions of Proposed Regulations Prior to Notice publication:

No public discussions were held prior to the Notice publication. There will be adequate time to review this proposal during the comment period

contained in the Commission's regulatory process.

IV. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action:

(a) Alternatives to Regulation Change:

1. Season and Bag Limit for Doves – addition of Eurasian collared-doves

An alternative to the Department's proposal to remove the bag limit on Eurasian collared-doves would be to remove the bag limit, and also to allow them to be taken year around. This is the approach that has been taken by some other states. An advantage to this alternative is that it would provide some additional hunter opportunity. However, the Department's Enforcement Branch believes that a year around season on Eurasian collared-doves would create a substantial Enforcement workload that would not be justified by a modest increase in hunter opportunity, and that white-wing and mourning doves would be taken due to misidentification by hunters.

(b) No Change Alternative:

The no change alternative was considered and found to be inadequate because of the following:

Adequate numbers of wild turkeys exist in San Diego County to justify a fall season there, and this would simplify regulations since the fall season would become the same statewide.

Even though the number of falconers who hunt upland game birds is small, allowing them a longer season would provide some additional opportunity, and would not effect upland game populations.

Continuing to include Eurasian collared-doves in the dove bag limit would result in unnecessarily forgoing some additional hunter opportunity. In addition, there is a possibility (as yet unproven) that these birds may compete with native doves, and might displace them in some locations.

(c) Consideration of Alternatives:

No reasonable alternatives considered would be more effective in carrying out the purposes for which the regulation changes are proposed.

V. Mitigation Measures Required by Regulatory Action:

The proposed regulatory action will have no negative impact on the environment;

therefore, no mitigation measures are needed.

VI. Impact of Regulatory Action:

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

- (a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States:

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. The proposed regulation change is sufficiently minor that there would be no significant impact to businesses.

- (b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California:

None.

- (c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business:

The agency is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

- (d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State:

None

- (e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies:

None

- (f) Programs mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts:

None

- (g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4:

None

- (h) Effect on Housing Costs:

None

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

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